

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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HINCHEY CALLS FOR INCREASED SECURITY AT RESERVOIR, FEDERAL AID FOR HUDSON VALLEY BUSINESSES

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today called on the federal government to assist New York City in providing more effective security at the Ashokan Reservoir. He also urged that grants be given to area businesses that have suffered because of road closures. Hinchey said he would make the requests in a letter to Director of Homeland Security Tom Ridge.

"The measures in place at the moment serve to keep law abiding citizens away from the water supply, but do little to protect against criminals or terrorists bent on contaminating it," said Hinchey. "I believe it is possible to provide better security and at the same time allow area companies to keep their businesses going."

Shortly after the September 11 attacks, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection placed barriers on roads around the reservoir. This has made traveling in the area very difficult and has raised concerns about emergency response times. In addition, many businesses in the area have been devastated by the inability of their customers to reach them and have contacted Hinchey for help. While these businesses are eligible for federal loans, most are not in a position to take on more debt.

"In any scenario these small companies will continue to be hurt," Hinchey added. "Therefore some of the emergency funding that Congress appropriated should be set aside to provide these businesses with cash relief."

In addition to writing to Ridge, Hinchey said he would invite DEP Commissioner Joel Miele to tour the reservoir and discuss better ways of protecting it. The DEP has indicated that it is acting on the advice of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, so Hinchey will request a meeting with FBI officials in Washington.